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SUBJECT: VICE-PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH HAITI PRIME
MINISTER PIERRE-LOUIS, APRIL 16, 2009

Classified By: WHA Assistant Secretary Thomas A. Shannon for
reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (U) April 16, 2009; 1045 EDT; Washington, D.C.

¶2. (U) Participants:

U.S.

The Vice President
Vice President's Office Brian McKeon
NSC Western Hemisphere Director Dan Restrepo
WHA A/S Thomas A. Shannon
Ambassador to Haiti Janet A. Sanderson
WHA/CAR Velia De Pirro, notetaker

Haiti

Prime Minister Michele Pierre Louis
Ambassador to the U.S. Raymond Joseph
Foreign Minister Alrich Nicolas
Finance Minister Daniel Dorsainville

Summary

¶3. (C) In a very cordial meeting, Vice President Biden and Haitian Prime Minister Michele Pierre Louis discussed the just concluded Haiti Donors Conference, which the Prime Minister described as a success, noting the participation of senior members of the international donor community, including the Secretary of State. Prime Minister Pierre Louis raised the Haitian government's concern with the corrupting influence of narcotics trafficking and the current U.S. travel warning on Haiti as a deterrent on foreign investment in the country. The Vice President asked the Prime Minister to consider ways in which Haiti's education system could be helped to impact directly on the high illiteracy rate in the country. He also noted the Administration's interest in helping getting improve Haitians' human rights, such as standard of living, security and fostering circumstances that will encourage people to stay in Haiti. End summary.

Donors Conference

¶4. (C) Prime Minister Pierre Louis thanked the Vice President and the United States for their support of Haiti, in particular the U.S. decision to provide budget support in the form on debt service payments. The Prime Minister described the conference as a success. She underscored the political symbolism of the Secretary's participation at the Haiti Donors Conference as well as the attention placed on Haiti with the attendance of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and senior officials from Canada, Japan and the international financial institutions. She said that the USD 324.7 million

in assistance pledged at the conference would help Haiti's recovery and development efforts.

Drug Trafficking and Corruption

15. (C) When asked about Haiti's concerns, Prime Minister Pierre Louis turned immediately to the threat to stability posed by narcotics trafficking through Haiti, stressing the corrupting influence of the trade. She warned that organized crime figures are seeking to enter politics as electoral candidates in search of the immunity election would confer on them. Acknowledging the counternarcotics assistance provided by the United States, the Prime Minister called for a greater response to stop the traffic, ninety percent of which heads for the United States. The Vice President said that the United States could do more, but urged the government of Haiti to do its part to counter the threat of drug trafficking. He highlighted the USD 2.13 million in Merida Initiative funding for law enforcement assistance for Haiti announced at the Donors Conference. WHA Assistant Secretary Shannon advised the Prime Minister of our intention to initiate the Caribbean Security Dialogue with CARICOM members and the Dominican Republic in mid-May.

Travel Warning and Foreign Investment

16. (C) The need for foreign investment in Haiti and the dampening effect the U.S. travel warning has on the country were the next key concerns raised by the Prime Minister. She asked the Vice President to look into revising the warning, saying it was based on out of date information from a time (late 2007-early 2008) when kidnappings had spiked. She pointed to the great change in Cite Soleil from gang-controlled slum to a more stable neighborhood. Pierre Louis noted that the issue of the warning was raised by potential investors with her in a meeting earlier in the week. The Vice President and Ambassador Sanderson explained that concern for the safety of American citizens governed the issuance of the warning. They agreed to review the question.

CLINTON